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This study was designed to determine the scope and limitations of collegiate practices of follow-up of teacher graduates throughout the United States and to evaluate the program in this area as found at The Pennsylvania State University. Conclusions emphasized the need for organized follow-up programs in every teacher preparation institution in the United States and stressed the fact that regular visitation by the faculty should be a feature of all follow-up programs in this field. Also pointed to the desirability of having an independent coordinator to administer the follow-up program.

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AN EVALUATION OF POST COLLEGIATE FOLLOW-UP PRACTICES IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

- John William Powers,
St. Francis College, Loretto, Penna.

Statement of the Problem

It is the purpose of this study: (1) to determine the scope and limitations of collegiate follow-up practices throughout the United States, and (2) to evaluate a program of this nature as found at The Pennsylvania State University.

The determination of the scope and limitations of collegiate follow-up programs throughout the United States involved four minor problems: (1) to determine the extent and the degree of organization of these collegiate programs, (2) to determine the major deterrents to the establishment of follow-up programs, (3) to determine the values and benefits ascribed to organized follow-up programs, and (4) to determine the best means of achieving these values of the follow-up program.

The evaluation of the follow-up program at The Pennsylvania State University involved four minor problems: (1) how well does the Pennsylvania State University Follow-up Program compare to the existing collegiate programs throughout the United States, (2) what benefits resulting from follow-up programs were achieved by The Pennsylvania State University Program, and (3) what recommendations might result in the improvement of The Pennsylvania State University Follow-up Program.

Procedures

To obtain the data on existing collegiate follow-up programs an Institutional Questionnaire was compiled for this study. This questionnaire was sent to 340 institutions. There were 202 replies. In addition, to aid the evaluation of The Pennsylvania State University Follow-up Program, two other questionnaires were prepared. The first, the Public School Administrator Questionnaire, was sent to 120 Pennsylvania public schoolmen. There were 100 respondents. The second questionnaire was sent to the beginning teachers. Of 100 questionnaires mailed to the new teachers there were 75 respondents.

Findings

There were 107 institutions completely lacking in follow-up practices. Of the remaining 95 respondents only 20 had fully organized programs including regular visitation by college personnel. There were 34 programs categorized as semi-organized follow-up programs. These had annual success reports, but little or no visitation of the new teachers. Occasional visitation or reporting was listed by 41 colleges. These were classified as having incidental follow-up.

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The major deterrents to the establishments of follow-up programs were in rank order of collegiate response:

1. Lack of financial support for such a program.
2. Lack of an adequate staff for such a program.
3. Geographical spread of teacher placement made it too difficult to conduct follow-up.
4. The value of follow-up did not warrant a shift of faculty to such an assignment.
5. Need for further evaluation of the present program practices to justify expenditure of time, money, and personnel involved in such a procedure.

The values of the follow-up program to the institution were:

1. Reliable information about the individual graduate to increase the efficiency of the placement office.
2. Increase in the total effectiveness of the placement office.
3. Evaluation of the undergraduate professional preparation with a resulting improvement in the curriculum.
4. Assistance to the beginning teachers.
5. Promotion of graduate work and extension courses.
6. A renewed awareness of the beginning teacher's problems on the part of the college education faculty.
7. Promotion of institutional good will among the public school administrators and the teaching alumni.

The best means of achieving the values of the follow-up program were:

1. Regular visitation and observation of the classroom work of the beginning teacher by the college personnel.
2. The use of individual standardized reports of visitation culminating in the summation report with recommendations for faculty action.
3. Supplementary to visitation, correspondence, college publications, supplying of curriculum materials, and extension work will enrich the follow-up program.

Conclusions

1. There should be organized follow-up programs established in every teacher preparation institution of the United States.
2. Regular visitation by the college faculty should be a feature of all follow-up programs.
3. Finances permitting, an independent coordinator should be entrusted with the administration of the follow-up program.
4. The public schools and the beginning teachers should be fully informed as to the objectives and services of the follow-up program. The spirit of partnership should be fostered.
5. Continuous self-evaluation of the follow-up program is necessary if improvement of the teacher preparation curriculum is desired.
6. The college visitor must be a person of high calibre both professionally and personally.

Second Major Problem

The evaluation of the follow-up program of The Pennsylvania State University.

Findings

The Pennsylvania State University was one of 21 respondents of 202 institutions having a fully organized follow-up program. The university was one of 13 colleges that had a definite statement as to the program and objectives of follow-up. Only 19 institutions including The Pennsylvania State University had regular visitation with standardized reporting of the individual visitation. The university was one of 12 institutions that had final summation reports.

The values accruing to The Pennsylvania State University as a result of its follow-up program were:

1. Individual form reports enabled the placement office and the education department to have reliable data on individual graduates.
2. This data enabled the placement office to provide the best suited individuals for particular teaching vacancies.
3. The final statistical analysis and summation report constituted a continuous evaluative process.
4. Valuable assistance was offered to The Pennsylvania State University beginning teachers.
5. Promotion of graduate study and extension courses.
6. Increased awareness of the beginning teacher's problems on the part of the college faculty.
7. Promotion of institutional good will with the public school administrators and teaching alumni was stimulated.

The outstanding features of The Pennsylvania State University Program of Follow-Up were:

1. The major feature of The Pennsylvania State University Program was the regular visitation of the new teachers by the college faculty.
2. Of equal importance was the high calibre both professionally and personally of the college visitor.
3. Another important feature was the standardized reporting of individual teacher success culminating in the detailed analysis and evaluation of the summation reports.
4. The distribution of the summation reports to all members of the educational faculty made for a sharper awareness of beginning teacher problems, and resulted in corrective action to improve the undergraduate professional preparation.

Recommendations

1. Increased financing to enable visitation to reach every teacher graduate.
2. Establishment of an independent coordinator of the follow-up program responsible only to the head of the education department.
3. Increased participation in the follow-up program by the academic departments and the fields of special education.
4. A two-day conference for beginning teachers to be held on the campus sometime during the last of January.